



CONGRESSMAN Henry Hyde



Special Report to Illinois' Sixth District

Contacting Congressman Henry Hyde

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Dear Friends:

My Washington Report informs you about issues of national importance and provides you with an important constituent questionnaire. As of this writing, Congress was working hard to pass a federal budget that meets our nation's needs and priorities for health care, homeland security, education, energy, transportation and much, much more.

I am happy to report that the economy continues to recover. Since March, more than 1 million new jobs have been created; the nation's gross domestic product (GDP) is growing at a record rate; and the stock market is up. The national unemployment rate continues to fall; 44 states reported a decrease in May.

And thanks to the Republican tax cuts, more than 111 million individuals and their families will receive an average tax cut of \$1,586 this year. In addition, 25 million small businesses will save an average of \$3,001.

We are making great strides in the War on Terror; cutting off financial aid to terrorist organizations; bringing democracy to the Middle East; and improving homeland security. To be sure, the job is not finished, but we will not give up fighting fanatic fundamentalists, as this is a war we dare not lose.

As always, I welcome your comments and encourage you to contact me. Because of security measures in Washington, mail reaches me sooner at my Addison office. However, you can also e-mail me via my Web site: www.house.gov/hyde.

I encourage you to respond to the questionnaire contained in this newsletter so that I will know your opinions about these important issues. Just cut along the dotted line and fold for return mail.

Have a great and safe summer!

PLACE
FIRST CLASS
POSTAGE
HERE

*Please deliver directly
to Congressman Hyde!*

Congressman Henry Hyde
50 East Oak Street, Suite 200
Addison, IL 60101

2004 CONSTITUENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please fill out the questionnaire on the reverse, cut out along dotted lines, affix postage and return.

Economy and Optimism Rise

After recovering from a recession that began in 1999, we are now enjoying an expanding economy thanks to the tax cuts of 2001. More than 1.5 million jobs have been created since last August, and unemployment rates are below historical averages.

Tax relief has reinvigorated the U.S. economy and is driving job creation. People now have more money to spend, and they're choosing to invest it in the economy.

Take a look at the big picture, and you'll see continued signs of recovery in every facet of the U.S. economy:

- **New jobs:** More than 1 million jobs were created since March, and 30 percent of U.S. employers expect to add workers by this fall.
- **Unemployment:** Rates have fallen in 44 states. The national rate is well below the average of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

- **Manufacturing:** The manufacturing industry has expanded for 12 consecutive months, registering the highest pace of activity in nearly 20 years.
- **Gross Domestic Product:** Growing at 5.6 percent – the fastest rate in nearly 20 years.
- **Household wealth:** A record high of \$44 trillion.
- **Homeownership:** A record high of 68.6 percent.
- **Stock market:** Up 18 percent – America's capital base at \$2 trillion.



2004 Constituent Questionnaire – Please Reply

CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUE

Would you support a constitutional amendment stipulating that "Under God" must remain in the Pledge of Allegiance?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

EDUCATION

Two years ago, President Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act, setting high standards for achievement in student performance. Since then, Congress has appropriated record funding for K-12 education. Math and reading scores are beginning to improve. If your children attend public school, have you seen academic improvements at their school?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Optional: What is your school or school district? _____

HEALTH CARE

If you are eligible for Medicare, do you plan to sign up for the new Prescription Drug Discount Card program that could save you up to 25 percent off your annual drug costs?

- Yes, I have already signed up.
- Yes, I plan to sign up very soon.
- No, I don't intend to sign up.
- Don't know

Would you support legislation allowing Americans to import cheaper prescription drugs from Canada and other foreign countries even if the U.S. government says it cannot guarantee the safety and effectiveness of those drugs?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

TAXES

Do you support a permanent repeal of discriminatory taxes such as the Death Tax and the Marriage Tax?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

VOTER FRAUD

The U.S. Constitution states that only U.S. citizens can vote in federal elections. Yet, many states do not verify that voters are actually U.S. citizens, thereby allowing non-citizens to vote. Would you support legislation requiring states to verify citizenship before people register to vote?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Would you be willing to bring photo ID to federal polling places to avoid voter fraud?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

WAR ON TERROR

The attacks on September 11, 2001 changed the way we think about national security. The War on Terror is not a war in which victory is measured by a signed treaty or a definite military victory. It is measured day-to-day in terms of preventing attacks at home. Will the ongoing War on Terror change your vacation/travel plans this year?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Do you support U.S. military action taken against terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Please also answer the following questions:

- Male
- Female
- 18 to 29
- 30 to 64 years old
- 65 years or older

Thank you for taking the time to let me know how you feel about these important issues.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Henry J. Hyde". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned at the bottom right of the page, overlapping the faint background seal of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Honoring Our Nation's Veterans

Congress remains committed to ensuring that our veterans are taken care of. We have made great strides in improving veterans' benefits. Since the Republicans took control of Congress in 1995, we have:

- ✓ **Expanded eligibility for medical care.** The number of vets eligible to receive VA medical care has increased from 2.5 million to 4.7 million today – an 88 percent increase.
- ✓ **Spent more on medical care than ever before.** Total spending has increased from \$16.2 billion in 1995 to \$23.8 billion this year – an increase of 72.5 percent.
- ✓ **Improved the GI Bill.** Monthly education benefit levels under the Montgomery GI Bill have more than doubled, from \$405 to \$985.
- ✓ **Increased total per-veteran spending** from \$1,368 in 1995 to \$2,443 this year – a 79 percent increase. Even better, for fiscal 2005, Congress has proposed increasing funding for veterans benefits to \$31 billion.

Congressman Hyde meets with former Sen. Bob Dole to discuss veterans issues at the national World War II Memorial. Both men are WW II veterans. Congressman Hyde served in combat with the Navy in the South Pacific, New Guinea and the Philippines.



The Soldiers You Never Hear About

You may not know it from watching the evening news, but there are incredible stories to be told in Iraq and Afghanistan, and behind every one of those stories is an American soldier.

From providing medical care and rebuilding schools, to kicking soccer balls with kids and spending time with orphans, our troops are helping to build new and better societies in Iraq and Afghanistan. The immediate and long-term benefits for a more peaceful region and world are immeasurable.

Here are just a few of the good-news stories you rarely hear about in the news:

- **Democracy:** On June 28, the Iraqi people began to govern themselves in a representative form of government. By January, they will elect their first freely elected national government, and by late 2005, they will vote on a new constitution.

- **Education:** School attendance is up 80 percent, and more than 2,200 schools have been renovated and rid of the weapons stored there. Girls can now attend school, and textbooks don't praise Saddam anymore.
- **Health care:** More than 400,000 kids have up-to-date immunizations; 240 hospitals have been renovated. Health care spending has increased by 30 times its prewar level.
- **Sanitation/Resources:** 4.5 million people have clean drinking water for the first time ever. Sewer and water lines are installed in every major city. Iraq receives twice the electrical power it did before the war.
- **Justice:** More than 60,000 Iraqi police officers are patrolling the streets, with more than 200,000 security forces members in training. An Iraqi court system is operating, as is a free press.

Medicare Reform: Keeping Our Promise to Seniors

More than 40 million Americans rely on Medicare to meet their health needs, with 1.6 million living in Illinois. Here are some of the highlights of the Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act:

- **Prescription Drug Benefit:** Full coverage takes effect in 2006. Until then, seniors can sign up for voluntary Prescription Drug Discount cards, which can reduce drug costs by 25 percent. Cards cost about \$30 a year.
- **Low-income seniors** will receive an additional \$1,200 over 18 months to help defray drug costs. Ten million low-income beneficiaries (407,000 from Illinois) will pay no more than \$5 per prescription.
- **Preventative care and disease management:** Free initial preventative physicals, cardiovascular screening, blood tests and diabetes screening for new enrollees.
- **Generic drugs:** Speeds availability of low-cost drugs.

- **Fees for Services:** Increases Medicare-payment reimbursement to health care providers.
- **Protects retiree health benefits:** Allows employers to fold their current health plans into Medicare. Provides \$18 billion in incentives to employers to maintain their retiree health plans.
- **Health Savings Accounts:** Tax-advantaged savings accounts can be created to pay for medical expenses.

Congressman Hyde listens as residents of the DuPage County Convalescent Center talk about the new Medicare bill and other issues important to Illinois seniors.



Countdown to Full Prescription Drug Coverage

June 1, 2004

Prescription Drug Discount Cards available now.

December 1, 2004

Open season: Your chance to choose a new or different prescription drug card.

January 1, 2006

The full Medicare prescription drug plan takes effect.

For more information about the new prescription drug benefit:

www.medicare.gov
1-800-MEDICARE

In Case You Missed It

WMD Found in Iraq: On May 15, a roadside bomb was found containing chemicals that, when combined, form sarin nerve agent. In June, U.S. weapons inspectors uncovered at least 10 artillery shells filled with banned chemical weapons. So far, 8,700 weapons depots have been found in Iraq, containing 1 million tons of arms.

Grand Jury Linked Saddam and Al Qaeda: During the Clinton Administration, a Federal Grand Jury issued an indictment against Osama Bin Laden, detailing a long-term conspiracy to attack U.S. facilities overseas and to kill Americans. The indictment states that Al Qaeda reached an agreement with Saddam to work cooperatively in weapons development, including chemical and nuclear weapons.

Homeland Security: Local terrorism preparedness programs have received \$26.7 billion in federal funds since 2001. First responders are getting the latest equipment and training to save lives. Thousands of explosives detection systems, x-ray devices and explosives trace systems are now installed in 448 commercial airports. Over 50,000 federal screeners have been hired to check passengers and luggage.

\$79 Million Returned to Illinois

Illinois residents deserve to receive services in return for the taxes they contribute to the federal government. Since last fall, I have helped to secure more than \$79 million in federal dollars for community projects and organizations in the Sixth Congressional District and the state of Illinois. Here are just a few of those projects:

- \$52 million for METRA expansion and upgrades.
- \$11.6 million for grade separation at Irving Park / Wood Dale roads.*
- \$7 million for Illinois buses and facilities.
- \$1.7 million for a pedestrian tunnel in Winfield.*
- \$400,000 to expand the DuPage Greenway Trail.*
- \$300,000 for security upgrades at the DuPage County Health Department.
- \$300,000 for historic renovation of DuPage Theatre.
- \$300,000 for bridges on the Illinois Prairie Path.*
- \$200,000 for construction at Midwestern University.
- \$125,000 to help the Ray Graham Association purchase disabled vans.

** Included in bill pending before conference committee.*

Federal Education Funding Reaches Historic Levels

In January, we celebrated the two-year anniversary of the No Child Left Behind Act. Using individual, state-approved plans, schools are measuring the progress of student achievement; keeping parents better informed; and identifying and supporting schools needing improvement.

The federal government is investing more money in K-12 education than ever before. In the last nine years, Congress has increased education spending by 142 percent! And since NCLB was adopted, education funding has increased by 43 percent in just four years! Here are some specific funding increases:

- **U.S. Department of Education:** Received \$55.7 billion in 2004 – a 142 percent increase since 1995.
- **Title I assistance for disadvantaged students:** Increased by \$1.9 billion since 2002.
- **Student tests:** States have received \$1.16 billion to develop and implement annual student testing.
- **Teacher Quality Grants:** Received \$2.93 billion in 2004 – a 35 percent increase since 2002.

- **Reading Grants:** Federal funding for reading programs has tripled under NCLB.
- **Pell Grants for college students:** Increased maximum award to \$4,050. Overall funding for 2004 increased \$885 million.
- **Head Start for disadvantaged students:** \$6.8 billion in 2004 – an increase of \$148 million.

After hosting a summit about NCLB, Rep. Hyde talks with students at Erickson Elementary School, in Bloomingdale, about what it's like to be a U.S. Congressman.



Congressman
Henry Hyde

SPECIAL REPORT
TO THE
SIXTH DISTRICT
OF ILLINOIS

JULY 2004

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OFFICIAL BUSINESS
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